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THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN. MANUAL OF INSTRUCTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING MOTHER'S ROLE IN TEACHER/CHILD AND CHILD/PEER SCHOOL SITUATIONS.

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THIS MANUAL DESCRIBES MEASURES USED IN "THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN" PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO. THE SAMPLE FOR THE STUDY CONSISTED OF 163 NEGRO MOTHER-CHILD PAIRS SELECTED FROM 3 SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES BASED ON THE FATHER'S OCCUPATION AND THE PARENTS' EDUCATION. A FOURTH GROUP INCLUDED FATHER-ABSENT FAMILIES. THE MOTHERS WERE INTERVIEWED AT HOME AND THE MOTHERS AND CHILDREN WERE TESTED AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO WHEN THE CHILDREN WERE 4 YEARS OLD. FOLLOW-UP DATA WERE OBTAINED WHEN THE CHILDREN WERE 6 AND AGAIN WHEN THEY WERE 7. TO ASSESS THE MOTHER'S VIEW OF HER ROLE IN SCHOOL SITUATIONS, EACH MOTHER WAS GIVEN 8 HYPOTHETICAL SCHOOL SITUATIONS IN WHICH A CONFLICT OCCURRED BETWEEN HER CHILD AND THE TEACHER, A PEER, OR THE INSTITUTIONAL DEMANDS OF THE SCHOOL. IN HALF OF THE CASES THE CHILD WAS IN THE WRONG, AND IN THE OTHER HALF HE WAS THE INNOCENT VICTIM OF ANOTHER'S MISBEHAVIOR. RESPONSES WERE SCORED BY 2 SCHEMES. (1) THE TYPE OF THE MAJOR APPEAL USED IN THE MOTHER'S STATEMENT OF WHAT SHE WOULD DO WAS CLASSIFIED AS STATUS-NORMATIVE, PERSON-SUBJECTIVE, OR COGNITIVE-RATIONAL. (2) EACH RESPONSE UNIT, WHICH WAS BASICALLY A SUBJECT-PREDICATE PAIR, WAS SCORED IN THE SAME CATEGORIES, AND PERCENTAGES WERE COMPUTED FOR ALL 8 SITUATIONS. THE SITUATION DESCRIPTIONS AND THE CODING CRITERIA ARE GIVEN, AND THE SCORING CATEGORIES ARE DISCUSSED. THIS IS A PART OF THE HOME INTERVIEW DESCRIBED IN PS 000 475. (DR)

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

Robert D. Hess, Principal Investigator

MANUAL OF INSTRUCTIONS

FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING

MOTHER'S ROLE IN TEACHER/CHILD AND

CHILD/PEER SCHOOL SITUATIONS

PS000479

The measures described in this manual were developed in the project, Cognitive Environments of Urban Pre-School Children, supported by: Research Grant #R-34 from the Children's Bureau, Social Security Administration, and the Early Education Research Center, National Laboratory in Early Education, Office of Education, both of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare; the Division of Research, Project Head Start, U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity; the Ford Foundation Fund for the Advancement of Learning; and grants-in-aid from the Social Science Research Committee of the Division of Social Sciences, University of Chicago.

THE COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENTS OF URBAN PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN

The research sample for the Cognitive Environment Study was composed of 163 pairs of Negro mothers and their four-year-old children, from three socioeconomic classes; defined by father's occupation and parents' education; upper-middle, professional and executive, with college education; upper-lower, skilled and blue collar, with high school education; lower-lower, semiskilled and unskilled, with no greater than tenth-grade education; a fourth group included father-absent families living on public assistance, otherwise identical to the lower-lower class group.

Subjects were interviewed in the home, and mothers and children were brought to the University of Chicago campus for testing, when the children were four years old. Follow-up data were obtained from both mother and child when the child was six years of age, and again at seven years.

Principal Investigator for the project is Professor Robert D. Hess, formerly Director, Urban Child Center, University of Chicago, now Lee Jacks Professor of Child Education, School of Education, Stanford University.

Co-Investigator for the follow-up study s Dr. Virginia C. Shipman, Research Associate (Associate Professor) and Lecturer, Committee on Human Development, and Director, Project Head Start Evaluation and Research Center, University of Chicago, who served as Project Director for the pre-school phase of the research.

Dr. Jere Edward Brophy, Research Associate (Assistant Professor), Committee on Human Development, University of Chicago, was Project Director for the follow-up study and participated as a member of the research staff of the pre-school study.

Dr. Roberta Meyer Bear, Research Associate (Assistant Professor), Committee on Human Development, University of Chicago, participated as a member of the research staff during the pre-school and follow-up phases of the project and was in charge of the manuscript preparation during the write-up phase of the research.

Other staff members who contributed greatly to the project include Dr. Ellis Olim, (University of Massachusetts, Amherst) who was responsible for the major analysis of maternal language; Dr. David Jackson, (Toronto, Ontario) who was involved in early stages of development of categories for the analysis of mother-child interaction, and participated in the processing and analysis of data; Mrs. Dorothy Runner, who supervised the training and work of the home interviewers, acted as a liason with public agencies, and had primary responsibility for obtaining the sample of subjects; and Mrs. Susan Beal, computer programmer.

COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENT STUDY

MANUAL FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING

MOTHER'S ROLE IN TEACHER/CHILD AND CHILD/PEER

SCHOOL SITUATIONS *

SUMMER 1967

INTRODUCTION

Mothers were presented a series of eight hypothetical situations which might occur in school, and in which conflict occurred between the child and the teacher, his peers, or the institutional demands of the school. In half of the cases, the child was clearly in the wrong; in the others, he was the innocent victim of another's failure to meet expected standards of behavior.

The mother's responses were scored according to two schemes; in one, each item was scored for the single major appeal used in her statement of what she would do if her child created such trouble or was the victim of another's misbehavior. The three basic types of appeal for which the responses were scored were: Status-normative, Person-subjective, and Cognitive-rational. The general definitions as used for this task and for other measures, are given in a later section of this manual, followed by the specific coding categories used in scoring the school situation questions. A fourth category was used when the mother's response was too vague to be scored, or was irrelevant or otherwise inappropriate to the question asked.

In the second scoring procedure, each unit of a response was scored as status - or person - oriented, or as undefinable; each situation then received a percentage score for status - and person - orientation, and the full response with all eight responses combined, was scored for percentages of status - and person - orientation.

* The major portion of this manual was prepared by Dr. Dina Feitelson, Post-Doctoral Fellow (National Council of Jewish Women), Graduate School of Education, University of Chicago, 1964.

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COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENT STUDY

MANUAL FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING

MOTHER'S ROLE IN TEACHER/CHILD AND CHILD/PEER SCHOOL SITUATIONS

ADMINISTRATION

During the home interview, mothers were asked to respond to eight hypothetical school situations:

1. WHEN THE TIME COMES FOR _____ TO GO TO SCHOOL AND HE/SHE IS ACTUALLY IN SCHOOL WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'D DO IF YOU FOUND THAT _____ TALKED IN CLASS WHEN THE TEACHER HAD TOLD THE CHILDREN TO DO THEIR WORK AND CONSTANTLY DISTURBED THE CLASS BY CUTTING UP OR THROWING PAPER AIRPLANES, ETC.?

2. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF THE TEACHER SCOLDED _____ IN FRONT OF THE CLASS AND SENT HIM/HER TO THE PRINCIPAL FOR SOMETHING HE/SHE DIDN'T DO?

3. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF _____ BEAT UP ANOTHER LITTLE BOY/GIRL AT SCHOOL WHEN THE OTHER CHILD HAD DONE NOTHING TO _____?

4. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF _____ WAS BEAT UP AT SCHOOL BY ANOTHER BOY/GIRL WHEN HE/SHE HAD DONE NOTHING TO THIS OTHER BOY/GIRL TO PROVOKE A FIGHT?

5. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF _____ WAS NOT DOING HIS/HER WORK IN SCHOOL AND NOT DOING THE HOMEWORK WHICH THE TEACHER ASSIGNED?

6. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF _____'S TEACHER WOULD NOT EXPLAIN HIS/HER WORK TO HIM/HER AND _____ DIDN'T UNDERSTAND HOW TO DO THE WORK OR EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS THAT THE TEACHER EXPECTED OF HIM/HER?

7. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF _____ WAS GETTING FAILING GRADES AND NOT LEARNING WHAT THE OTHER CHILDREN WERE LEARNING IN SCHOOL?

8. WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF _____ HAD A TEACHER WHO JUST DIDN'T SEEM TO KNOW HOW TO TEACH CHILDREN ANYTHING, ONE WHO WAS INCOMPETENT AND COULDN'T SEEM TO TEACH _____ OR THE OTHER CHILDREN?

The mother's responses were tape-recorded and later transcribed; the typed protocols were used for scoring.

COGNITIVE ENVIRONMENT STUDY

MANUAL FOR ADMINISTERING AND SCORING

MOTHER'S ROLE IN TEACHER/CHILD AND CHILD/PEER SCHOOL SITUATIONS

FIRST SCORING PROCEDURE

THE BASIC SCORING CATEGORIES

1. The Status-normative appeal is based on both an assumed justice in the status quo and a reliance on traditional definitions of proper behavior. Maternal statements which fit this category are imperative or absolute, calling for compliance with established definitions of status and role positions. Primary instances of normative status are age-roles and sex-roles: certain behaviors are proper for boys and not for girls, and vice versa; children are expected to defer to parents and other adults by virtue of the age difference or because adults are larger and more powerful. Social norms and parental commands are expressed as absolutes, and are to be accepted as given, not regarded as objects or occasions of inquiry or debate. The child is oriented toward obeying externally-enforced, institutionally-defined rules.

2. The Person-subjective appeal is based on internal, personal, uniquely individual states of the participants in an exchange, rather than on group-defined statuses and normative roles. Where conflict occurs between the child and others or between the child and social institutions, the child's feelings and preferences are taken into account. The child is, in turn, encouraged to take the role of another, to examine his behavior from a different perspective, and is expected to alter that behavior accordingly. The child's attention is directed toward individuals rather than to roles, and to feelings and preferences rather than to rules. The child is oriented toward establishing empathy with other individuals.

3. The Cognitive-rational appeal is based on reasonable argument. The present situation or the state of events desired by the parent is justified by the specific

elements of the situation - although some general rule may be applied, and the existence of alternatives is suggested or stated. Antecedent-consequent considerations are stressed which may not necessarily reflect the status, role, or subjective state of the participants, but which have a pragmatic logic. This approach not only permits consideration of alternatives, it also encourages debate and exploration of possibilities for resolving a conflict. The child is oriented toward establishing a system of logical principles.

THE SCORING CODES

Maternal responses to each situation were scored for the major type of appeal used by the mother in dealing with the situation, as specified below:

(S) = The mother commands absolute obedience to social norms and institutionalized rules; the command is justified, if at all, by the relative status of the persons involved or by the norms and rules themselves. The status quo is supported and upheld.

(P) = The mother encourages the child to empathize with another's feelings and/or considers the child's feelings in explaining his behavior; the justification for any action taken includes some statement of the subjective states of the persons involved, and the necessity of taking feelings into account.

(R) = The mother explains that the specific elements leading up to and involved in the present situation logically demand a certain resolution, and she asks the child to examine the situation rationally or she details the reasons for a particular demand, justifying her expectations by logical reasoning.

(I) = Irrelevant, inappropriate, or vague responses which cannot be scored as one of the above.

SPECIFIC CODING CATEGORIES FOR SCHOOL SITUATIONS

S = Status-normative appeal: responses which reinforce expectations of "correct" or "proper" behavior, and which define expectations in terms of the child's role in relationship to the school as an institution, to the peer group as equals, or to the teacher or other adults as authority; responses in which the mother's actions toward the child involve absolute demands for obedience and are explained or justified by normative considerations (e.g., age, sex); and responses in which the mother refers the problem to an authority such as the school or teacher.

P = Person-subjective appeal: responses which clearly indicate consideration of the child's feelings, wishes, motivation, and other unique personal qualities; responses in which the mother's actions are explained or justified by consideration of the feelings of the child or of others; and responses in which the child is encouraged to interpret his behavior and its results as they might appear to another person.

R = Cognitive-rational appeal: responses which clearly include consideration of the unique specific qualities of the given situation, rather than consideration of normative expectations; and responses in which the mother uses logical reasoning to explain her actions toward the child, to bolster her conclusions or action, or to explain the situation to the child or to others.

I = Irrelevant, Inappropriate, or Vague: responses in which the mother fails to deal with the conflict or fails to indicate clearly the rationale for any action she might take or might expect from others.

SECOND SCORING PROCEDURE

INTRODUCTION

The scoring of this interview is according to the conceptual framework developed by B. Berstein. (See "Family Role Systems, Communication, and Socialization," 1964.) It is expected that most responses will fall fairly conclusively into one of the two general categories delineated by Bernstein. In scoring the responses, only content will be taken into account.

UNIT OF SCORING

The informalities of the spoken language and the punctuation introduced by those transcribing the tapes of the mothers' interviews create many difficulties in defining a meaningful unit for scoring. Most commonly, there appear written sentences which are composed of many completed thoughts, or many "thought-sentences". Conjunctions and punctuation marks which connect, such as, ; - , etc., create a smooth-reading flow which for scoring purposes must be broken down into message units. A completed thought is composed of essentially the subject-and-predicate pair. If a dependent clause is used with relation to an independent clause, both clauses constitute a simple unit. In addition, subjects and objects are often assumed by the mother, as for example when she says, "to mind", and means, "I would tell him to mind". In order to assess proportionate weights of each type of response within a single protocol, as well as to compare subjects for simple presence or absence of differential attention to any given category of response, it is important that every grammatically meaningful unit is counted. Although many such units do not answer the question and are not meaningful in terms of the scoring categories being used, these

units must be tallied for a language analysis which may be done later. The "Irrelevant" category provides for their scoring. The only units which will be excluded are those which are not a response to the question, but are a part of the subject's conversation with the interviewer or with others, or are a part of the behavior of the subject as she "settles in" in preparation for her response.

The unit of scoring is a completed thought, although it need not necessarily be a sentence. Verbatim or essential repetition of a completed thought will be counted for as many units as the subject uses to express herself. All elaborations of a completed thought are similarly tallied, so long as each repetition or elaboration is itself a completed thought.

A tally of total number of units is made before any attempt at categorizing and scoring. This tally is made in grammatical terms as described above. Although the scorer cannot avoid being aware of the content of the protocol and of each unit as it is so tallied, every attempt is made to ignore the meaning of the message and to concentrate on the subject-and-predicate structure until after the tally is completed and actual scoring begins. Responses relating to a biased probing question by the interviewer are not counted or scored.

SCORING CATEGORIES

S = Status Oriented Responses: All responses which reinforce expectations of "right" or "proper" behavior, in relation to the school setting or the peer group, are status oriented responses. Whenever the mother indicates that she would unquestioningly reinforce the authority of the school or a single teacher, by spanking or other punishment, or by talking to the child, her response clearly belongs to this category, as does referral of any matter back to school or teacher as the authority responsible for such business.

P = Person Oriented Responses: Person Oriented Responses include all responses which clearly take into account (pay heed to) the personal qualities of the child, his feelings and reactions, or the specific qualities of any situation. A reaction to the specifics of the situation instead of to the normative or structural relations among school, child, teacher, or pupil, all fall within this domain.

U = Unclear: This category includes all relevant responses which are not easily classified in one of the two main categories; such items are the results of indecision and passiveness or are too vague to be defined.

I = Irrelevant: Any response not pertinent to the question asked, belongs to this category. Primary examples are tangential remarks about the amount of thought the respondent has given the issue, or discourses on similar past events without indicating how such situations were handled or how the statements relate to the issue at hand.